

***Response to Arguments***

1. Applicant's arguments, see remark, filed 3/5/2008, with respect to 102 (b) Rejection have been fully considered and are persuasive. The 102 (b) rejection of claims 1, 2, 4, 5 and 8 has been withdrawn.
  
2. Claims 1, 2, 4, 5 and 8 are allowed. The prior art failed to teaches the method of initially outputting link messages on the downstream link coupled to each port device prior to receipt of the initial command, with the link messages holding a link position value equal to a fixed value; outputting incremented link messages on the downstream link coupled to each port device subsequent to receiving a link message on its upstream link and prior to receipt of the initial command, with the incremented link messages holding a link position value equal to an incremented link position value where the incremented link position value is equal to the link position value received on the upstream link incremented by one, As recited in claims 1, 4 and 8.

***Conclusion***

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to KAN YUEN whose telephone number is (571)270-1413. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday 10:00a.m-3:00p.m EST.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Ricky O. Ngo can be reached on 571-272-3139. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

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